for science education in the country and the national expenditure on R&D was abysmally low;

(b) whether in an attempt to improve science education in the country, his Ministry has set up two Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research at Kolkata and Pune, besides setting up a taskforce for basic scientific research; and

(c) if so, the what extent the task force has been able to improve the science education in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) There is a need to enhance and improve scientific education and research in the country to keep pace with fast developing global information and knowledge regime. In this direction the Government has already set up three Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs) at Kolkata, Pune and Mohali. Moreover, the Government had constituted a Task Force for basic scientific research in universities. The Task Force has made a number of recommendations including creation of position of Research Scientists, at various levels, networking centres in basic sciences, formal linkage between the Universities and National level institutions, upgradation of infrastructure facilities etc. The UGC has been directed to expeditiously implement the recommendations contained in the Report. The Members of the Task Force have been asked to function as an Empowered Committee to implement and monitor the recommendations.

Promotion of neighbourhood schools

2911. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken by Government to promote the neighbourhood schools;

(b) whether it is a fact that inadequate quality of education, poor educational infrastructure and other necessary facilities in Government schools have led the parents to seek admissions in select private schools instead of neighbourhood schools;

(c) if so, the steps being taken to improve the educational performance of Government schools;

(d) whether Government propose to evolve rating system for the schools;

(e) if so, what are the criteria for such rating system; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) Central Government is following National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 as amended in 1992, envisaging the National System of Education, which implies that, up to a given level, all students irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex have access to education of a comparable quality. It includes a common education structure, a national curriculum framework and minimum levels of learning for each stage of education. It may also be mentioned that education being a concurrent subject, school education is primarily in the domain of State Governments.

(c) The National Curriculum Framework 2005 has been formulated and is being rolled out in the country to impove the quality of education in schools. The Kendriya and Navodaya Vidyalayas are showing good results. For the elementary education sector, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is being implemented to improve quality in schools.

(d) to (f) There is no proposal at present to evolve a rating system for schools.

Academic exchanges among historians

2912. SHRI MAHMOOD A. MADANI:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and Pakistan have agreed for greater academic exchanges among the historians and to facilitate historical research between two countries;

(b) if so, how many such interactions and exchanges have taken place ever since the agreement and the institutions involved;